

## Obituary

SIR EDWARD SHARPEY-SCHAFFER, F.R.S.

LL.D., M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P.Ed.

Emeritus Professor of Physiology in the University of Edinburgh

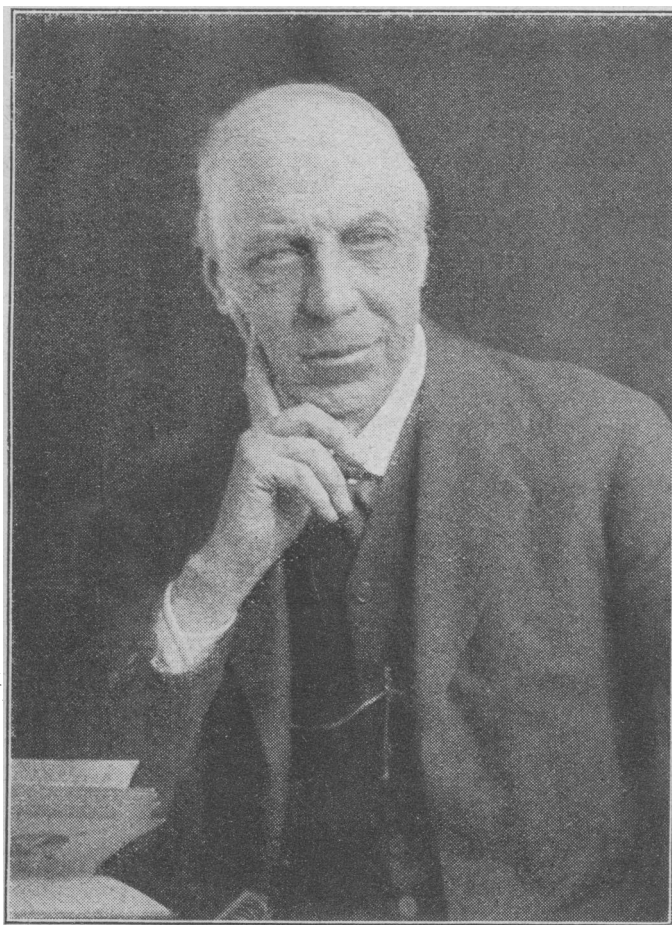
By the death of Sir Edward Sharpey-Schafer on March 29th, in his eighty-fifth year, the world loses one of its most distinguished physiologists, and one whose name is very widely known to the general public, for his method of giving artificial respiration in the prone position has been adopted by all those who have to do with ambulance work and teach the means of saving life.

Born in London on June 2nd, 1850, the son of James William Henry Schäfer of the free city of Hamburg and of Highgate, he was educated at Clewer House School and University College, London, where he came under the influence of William Sharpey, the physiologist, whose name he added to his own in 1918 to emphasize the fact that he was an Englishman by birth and education, at a time when anyone with a German name was regarded with suspicion and hostility by newspaper-inflamed ignorant people. Such action in his case should have been wholly unnecessary, for both his sons lost their lives in the war, one, I believe, when serving in a "Q" boat.

In 1873 the young Schafer became the first Sharpey scholar, and in 1874 was appointed assistant professor of physiology at University College when Sharpey resigned to be succeeded by Burdon-Sanderson. On the latter going, in 1883, to fill the newly created chair at Oxford, Schafer became Jodrell professor, and held this chair until 1899, when he was elected to the chair of physiology at Edinburgh University. While in London he also held the Fullerian professorship at the Royal Institution. From 1895 to 1900 Schafer acted as general secretary to the British Association, and was elected president in 1912. In 1923 he was president of the International Physiological Congress. As president of the British Association he gave an address which attracted wide attention, in that he claimed that life was due to no mysterious vital force, but to the action of chemico-physical laws. Confirmation of his views may be now found in the fact that modern physical research has shown that the atomic structure and interaction of the non-living is just as subtle and beyond the scope of ultimate explanation as that of living bodies. Many honours deservedly fell to Sharpey-Schafer. He was knighted in 1913, received honorary doctorates from Oxford, Cambridge, Aberdeen, St.

Andrews, Dublin, McGill, Melbourne, the National University of Ireland, Berne, Gröningen, and Louvain, and was made an honorary F.R.C.P.Ed. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1878 when 28 years old, served more than one term on the council, and was awarded a Royal Medal in 1902 and the Copley Medal (the highest honour of the society) in 1924. In 1897 he received the Baly Medal of the Royal College of Physicians of London, and in 1911 the de Cyen Prize from the Academy of Sciences of the Royal Institute of Bologna. He was invited to lecture at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and the Leland Stanford University, and was made a corresponding member of many foreign and learned societies.

At the beginning of his career Schafer specialized in histology, and in particular carried out researches into the minute structure of the muscle fibre, using the remarkable wing muscle of insects to illustrate his views. He was author of *Essentials of Histology*, which has run through very many editions, and must have proved a steady and valuable minor source of income; he also dealt with minute anatomy in a scholarly volume published in the tenth edition of *Quain's Anatomy*. Having carried out, with Victor Horsley and others, many researches on cerebral localization, and detailed these in no fewer than twenty papers, he became, with George Oliver, the discoverer of the remarkable action on blood pressure which followed an injection of an extract of the suprarenal gland. Oliver had invented the arteriometer, an ingenious instrument by which he measured the diameter of the radial artery, and had made observations on patients, who, if I remember right, took suprarenal extract by the mouth, which led him



*E. Sharpey Schafer*

to suggest the research to Schafer. The surprising results which they obtained on injection started a prolonged inquiry into the action of glandular hormones, and opened up a vast new field of research in physiology with important applications to clinical medicine. The sum of these researches was given by Sharpey-Schafer in his book *The Endocrine Organs*. One of his assistants, Professor Swale Vincent, became a distinguished worker on this line. Schafer also edited an *Advanced Textbook of Physiology*, to which many of the leading physiologists in this country contributed. In recent times, to commemorate the jubilee of the society, he put together a history of the Physiological Society, 1876-1926, and on his retirement from the Edinburgh chair the society held a dinner in his honour. He was then the only survivor of those nineteen persons who met in London on March 31st, 1876, and resolved to found that society. Schafer started, and edited up to his retirement,

the *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Physiology*, which has now reached its twenty-fifth volume.

His contributions to scientific journals were very numerous, as he continued actively engaged in research up to his retirement in 1933, when he was made Emeritus Professor. His past and present assistants then published in his honour a special volume of the *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Physiology*, composed of 29 papers on original researches carried out by themselves. In the preface to this volume it was stated that "Sharpey-Schafer's contributions to physiological science are stored in the libraries and utilized daily by research workers in further extending the boundaries of knowledge which he himself has done so much to advance." A special volume of this publication, bound in calf, was presented to Sharpey-Schafer, containing a vellum interleaf signed by all the contributors. This interleaf had to be sent round the world—to America, Cape Colony, New Zealand, China, etc.—to secure the signatures of those whom the master had taught, and who had gone out to fill chairs of physiology in many distant climes.

Sharpey-Schafer had four children, and is survived by one daughter and his second wife, Ethel Maud, daughter of J. H. Roberts, F.R.C.S. On his retirement, while still in remarkable vigour and good health, he underwent a severe operation, which unfortunately was followed by pneumonia. From this he never fully recovered, and remained frail up to his death. His long years of vigour were due in part to the excellent golf which he played on the famous links at North Berwick, where his charming house was situated.

*For the foregoing memoir we are indebted to Sir LEONARD HILL, who adds a personal appreciation:*

I was taught physiology by Sharpey-Schafer, and became, forty years ago, intimately acquainted with him on being appointed Sharpey scholar, and, later, assistant professor under him at University College, London. He was then in his prime, and lived at a house he had had built in beautiful surroundings at Croxley Green. How clearly I remember a walk taken with him and his four young and lovely children on a June Sunday, when a well-trained faculty for birds'-nesting enabled me to find nest after nest to the delight of the children and the amazement of their father. Alas! three of these children were to meet tragic deaths. Working in the physiology laboratory, then at University College, were Sidney Ringer, who used to come before breakfast to test mosquito larvae in saline solutions, Victor Horsley, Halliburton, Marcet, Sidney Martin, Rose Bradford, Ruffer, George Oliver, and Bayliss. The laboratory was small and comparatively ill equipped, but an immense amount of research was done. Schafer left his assistants free to carry on their work, ready to help when asked. I myself owed very much to his example and to his kindness and forbearance. As a teacher Schafer was accurate and precise, speaking with no rhetorical flourishes, but with a quiet and rather cold delivery.

In his triple capacity of researcher, teacher, and administrator he rendered invaluable services, first to University College and then to Edinburgh University. Passionately devoted though he was to his research work, he never allowed this to interfere with what he considered his duties to his students or to his University. His department at Edinburgh was, I am told, so efficiently organized that personal obtrusiveness was unnecessary, and although in the latter years he assumed rather an Olympian attitude in the eyes of the younger generation of students, yet one and all realized that he was not only available but all too willing to help them in their difficulties. A superb intolerance of intellectual dishonesty was combined in him with a kindly, generous tolerance of the

inevitable slips and errors of his assistants and students. His intensely logical and inductive mind proved of the greatest assistance at University College, and, I understand, to the Edinburgh Senatus; it will be long ere his colleagues find a successor to whom they may appeal with more confidence for a judicial verdict on their deliberations. Many generations of students and assistants have carried away with them as one of their pleasantest memories those delightful summer parties at North Berwick, where Sir Edward and Lady Sharpey-Schafer proved to be the perfect host and hostess. It is in ways such as these that he remains endeared to those whom he taught and with whom he worked. His output of research work was extraordinary, and was carried on without diminution till over eighty years. This work stands as the testimony of his greatness.

L. H.

Sir Edward Sharpey-Schafer had been a member of the British Medical Association for the past fifty-five years. At the Annual Meeting in Liverpool in 1883 he was president of the Section of Anatomy and Physiology; at the London Meeting in 1895 he gave the Address in Physiology; and at the Edinburgh Meeting in 1927 he was president of the Section of Physiology and Biochemistry.

[The photograph reproduced is by Swan Watson, Edinburgh.]

#### SIR HORACE PINCHING, K.C.M.G.

Formerly Director-General, Egyptian Public Health Department  
We regret to announce that Major Sir Horace Pinching, K.C.M.G., late R.A.M.C., died suddenly in Cairo on March 28th.

Horace Henderson Pinching was born at Gravesend on May 19th, 1857, the son of the late C. J. Pinching, J.P., of that town, was educated at Epsom College, Pembroke College, Oxford, and St. George's Hospital, graduated M.A. Oxford in 1882, and took the M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. Lond. in 1883. Entering the Army as surgeon on February 2nd, 1884, he became major after twelve years' service, and retired on September 23rd, 1896. In March, 1888, he was seconded for service with the Egyptian Army; in September, 1894, he was transferred from the Army to the Sanitary Department, Egypt; in 1899 he was appointed Director-General of the Egyptian Public Health Department, and retired from that service in 1908, but made his home in Cairo.

He served in the Sudan in three campaigns: in the Nile expedition of 1884-5, medal with clasp and Khedive's bronze star; at the action of Giniss in 1885; and in the campaign of 1888-9, at the actions of Gamaizah and Toski, was mentioned in dispatches in the *London Gazette* of September 6th, 1889, and received two clasps and the fourth class of the Medjidieh. Besides the Medjidieh, he received the Order of the Star of Ethiopia, second class, in 1897, and the K.C.M.G. in 1902. In 1903 Sir Horace Pinching married Edmée Anna, daughter of Ernest Cramer of Pressy, Geneva, and had two daughters. He had been a member of the British Medical Association for more than forty-seven years.

#### G. E. ODDIN-TAYLOR, M.R.C.S.

Past President of the Natal Inland Branch

The leader of the medical profession in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, Dr. Gordon Ernest Oddin-Taylor, died in Grey's Hospital on March 15th.

Born in Norfolk sixty-one years ago, and a student of St. Thomas's Hospital, Oddin-Taylor qualified M.R.C.S. Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond. in 1896, was appointed house-surgeon at his own hospital, and went out to Pieter-